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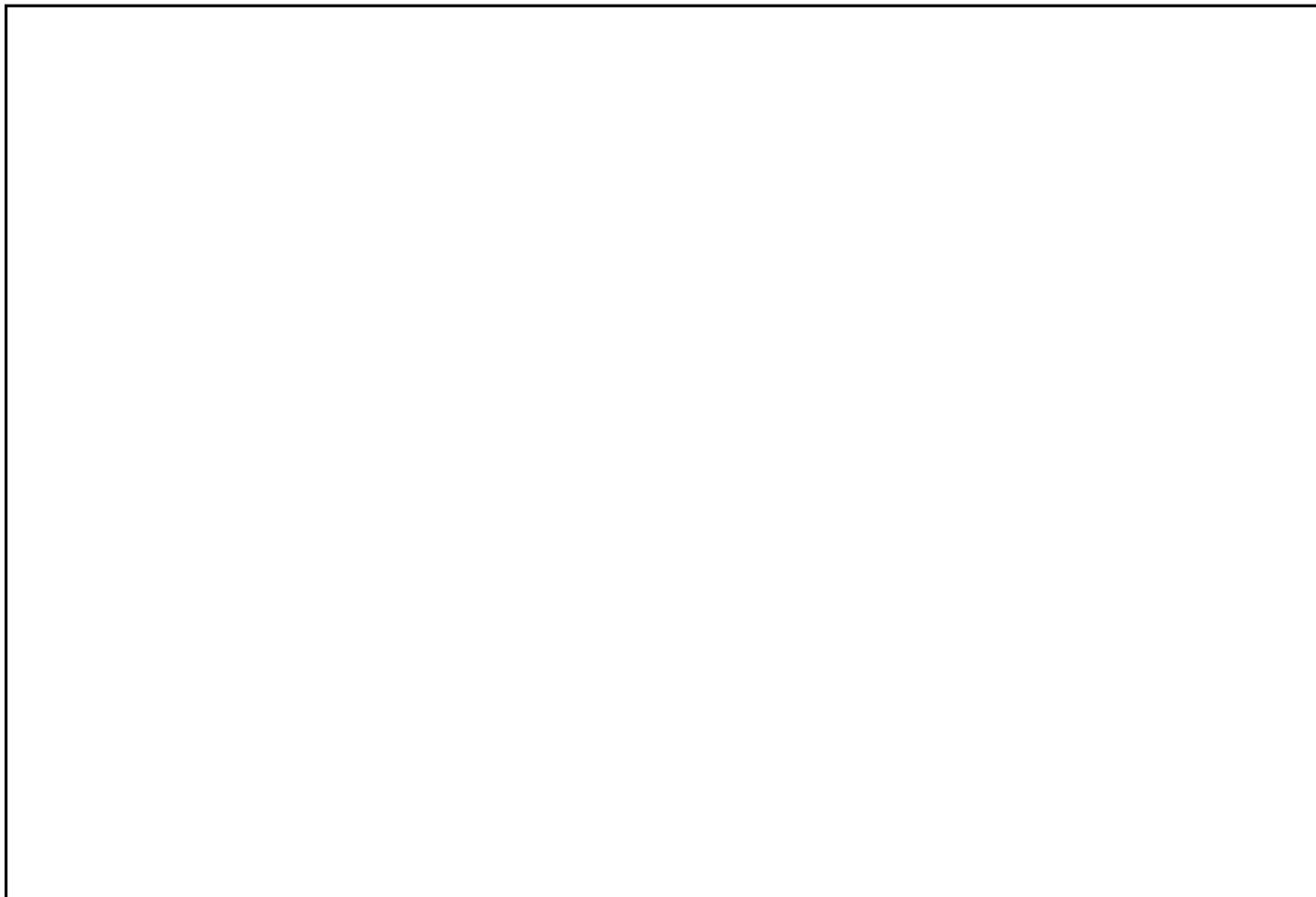
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WESTERN EUROPE

2. Benelux opposes pressure for early European Defense agreement:

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At the 26 November meeting of the Foreign Ministers of France, Great Britain and the United States with the Benelux Foreign Ministers, the latter complained over the fact that conclusion of the contractual arrangement with Germany depends on agreement on the European Defense Forces. The Benelux Ministers

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also resented being put into the position of blocking EDF, adding that constitutional problems made their situations different from France and Germany.

Comment: A Benelux draft resolution submitted to the NATO Council just prior to this meeting suggested that the Benelux countries would resist any pressure for concluding the EDF Conference which might result in their having to accept a French dictation of the treaty. The French insist that the contractual arrangement must be linked with Germany's acceptance of the European Defense Forces.

The Belgian Foreign Minister had previously doubted the chances of parliamentary approval of EDF as it now stands.

3. Soviet authorities repeat Austrian remilitarization charges:

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The Soviet representative on the Allied Council on 30 November repeated charges that the three Western occupying powers are remilitarizing their zones of Austria. The three Western High

Commissioners rejected the charges and refused to accept a Soviet resolution demanding a quadripartite investigation. A US counterproposal confirming the completion of demilitarization, requiring commercial enterprises operated by the occupying powers to comply with Austrian laws, and urging the early conclusion of a treaty was rejected by the Soviet High Commissioner. The meeting ended without agreement.

Comment: With the assistance of the Austrian Communist press and the forum provided by the Allied Council, the Soviet element has succeeded in extending these charges over a two-month period. Austrian and Allied observers believe that Soviet emphasis on this issue has been designed to provide a convenient excuse for refusing to sign an Austrian treaty. Rejection of the Soviet resolution, however, will deprive Soviet allegations of the dignity which would have been lent them by a pending investigation.

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6. French Resident General fears trouble in Tunisia:

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The French Resident General in Tunisia fears that the "stiffening attitude" of French political groups toward Tunisia is preventing any concessions on governmental reform. He predicts that incidents may occur, but that the French will be able to maintain order.

Comment: The overwhelming success of a 24-hour general strike on 29 November, called by the nationalist labor union to demonstrate Tunisian solidarity with the demands presented in Paris by Tunisian Prime Minister Chenik, apparently has caused concern in French governmental circles. Chenik and his delegation will probably become more insistent, and the Resident General, who failed to keep the delegation away from Paris, may be replaced. The French are considering the appointment of a joint French-Tunisian commission to study the reform question.

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